A HALF REMEMBERED TRADITION
STAINED GLASS AT THE MACK

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ABSTRACT

Interest in the architectural work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh has been granted an extensive amount of attention which has only increased after the partial loss of the west wing to fire in May 2014. However, even in the broad compilation of literature, hardly any attention has been afforded to his stained glass. The following work set out to explore the role of stained glass in the Mackintosh Building at the Glasgow School of Art through an investigation into his formative influences. Insight into the intentions and narratives behind his stained glass only become comprehensible if understood within a wider context, incorporating his influences, artwork and attitudes. It was found that there was a commonality throughout the narratives permeating his work. This inferred that his use of stained glass in this significant building was as a testing ground for the synthesis of his ideological attitudes and influences. The restoration is generating new insight into overlooked aspects of his designs, renewing the interest in Mackintosh, and curiously redefining many widely held beliefs.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Mack The Mackintosh Building, Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow

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1. INTRODUCTION

Interest continues to grow around the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868 – 1928), increased by the fire at the Glasgow School of Art's Mackintosh Building in 2014. In the wake of the partial destruction of this significant building it is an appropriate time to further the research into the elements that comprised his architecture. This larger body of research will help to ensure that the integrity of Mackintosh's designs can be retained in all of his work, both artistic and architectural, should they suffer future damages. As the first phase of the Mack occurred in the earlier stages of his career, it provides relatively early examples of his architectural and decorative design work.

An understanding of the physical and figurative attributes is currently being explored in the body of research being formed around the restoration of this historically significant building, referred to by all who are familiar with the school as the Mack and will be referred to in this manner hereafter. An element of his work that is of interest is his stained glass, with its abstract and figurative motifs. Roger Billcliffe summarises the outcome as 'a style with recognisable roots, the individual motifs of which can be traced to specific sources, though the final effect is nonetheless individual and inventive.'[1]

Historically, stained glass was a symbolic device in Christian Art, acting as a visual tapestry to the congregation. The mass illiteracy of Europe, commonplace until after the Enlightenment, elevated stained glass in importance almost to the level of the sermon itself. Whole elevations would be dictated by these vast panels, inseparable from the final vision for the architecture. This visual tapestry was comprised of Christian iconography and would convey teachings from the Bible, which could be read through these icons as the congregation would be familiar with their implied meanings.[2] This is in contrast to its use in the nineteenth century which, gaining popularity as a decorative device, adhered less rigidly to this traditional purpose.

Mackintosh's extensive use of the medium alludes to more than just a decorative purpose, with abstracted motifs and figures suggesting an obscure underlying narrative to his work. To understand the role of stained glass in the Mack, and to determine his intention and narratives underlying these designs, it is necessary to first determine his approach to the role of symbolism and ornamentation in architecture. This can be determined through records of his lectures on this subject, alongside the manifestation of this ideology in his early artwork and evidence for the translation of this into his architectural schemes. It is important to note that in the context of this

[1] Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings & Interior Designs*, 3rd ed. (Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 1986), 9.
[2] Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Mary Clerkin Higgins, *The History of Stained Glass: The Art of Light, Medieval to Contemporary* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 10-13.

investigation *stained glass* refers to glass of any colour, covering painted glass, grisaille glass, coloured glass and lead glass.

The stained glass in the Mack has been afforded the attention of Sally Rush with other authors writing briefly about stained glass as part of his interior schemes. [3] However, it has not been given the same attention afforded to his furniture or textiles. It should be acknowledged that the literature which discusses his ideas and approach to this subject will therefore incorporate a broader medium than his stained glass, from furniture design to textiles and watercolours. To compile evidence about his use of stained glass, research needs to be gathered from the stained glass still in situ in addition to photographs and descriptions of stained glass that may have been removed during the restoration. Also to be considered is his drawings, cartoons and photographs that show the intended design and placement within his original schemes. Once there is a collation of this body of work it can be evaluated to determine the role of stained glass in the Mack and the extent to which Mackintosh's underlying intentions and narrative can be established.

[3] See Sally Rush, 'Scottish Glass Painting, 1830-1870' (PhD, Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art and University of Glasgow, 2001). See also Billcliffe, *C. R. Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture.*

2. GLASGOW AND GLASS

Victorian Glasgow saw rapid growth in the early nineteenth century with the shift towards heavy industry, bringing with it a growth in the railways and a vast surge in population. Glasgow's relative isolation from England and within Scotland was over. The city gained the status as the second city of the Empire and the proceeds from this industrial success established Glasgow as a city of art and culture. As a city reliant on manufacturing it demanded a trained workforce and the Glasgow School of Art could provide the required source of draftsmen, artists and craftsmen for Glasgow's key industries. This upheaval in industry had a profound effect on the decorative arts, heralding a revival in Glasgow's stained glass studios.

> The 19th century was one of great contrasts. Pomp and splendour and appalling squalor on the one hand; and on the other a welter of insincerity, imitation, and fancy-dress building contrasted sharply with splendid feats of engineering. [4]

Romanticism and Gothic Revival, borne from uncertainty in the face of vast industrial upheaval, led to a renewed interest in medievalism. This was a contributing factor to a surge in the popularity of stained glass during the early nineteenth century. The prevalence in ecclesiastic, institutional and domestic settings grew rapidly as the stained glass studios became established.

Scotland's largely neo-classical stance, notably in Edinburgh, coupled with the vast destruction of medieval stained glass during the Reformation, meant the stained glass revival in Scotland was initially limited compared to that of England. Revival of stained glass in Glasgow began in earnest with the establishment of the studios of David Keir and James Ballantine. The stylistic approaches of these studios were limited by the Royal Bavarian Glassworks of Munich gaining the commission for the re-glazing of Glasgow Cathedral. This set a preference of style to be adhered to by the Scottish studios.

Glasgow's move away from the Munich style was instigated by Daniel Cottier with his studio's distinguished use of bold colour and influences from the Aesthetic movement. Following Cottier's departure to London, Stephen Adam set up studios in Glasgow taking the stance that modern stained glass should combine the simplicity of the early medieval compositions with the fifteenth century approach to colour. He was strongly against the common practice of copying medieval glass and he disregarded conventional themes in favour of a narrative that reflected the strength of the new industries. This conviction can be seen in his panels depicting an idealised narrative of

[4] John Penoyre and Michael Ryan, *The Observer's Book of British Architecture* (London: Frederick Warne & Co, 1951) 152.

local trades. Examples of this can be seen in Maryhill Burgh Halls, illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2, in addition to the panels in J.J. Burnet's Clydeport Building showing the power of the shipping industry. Redefinition of stained glass as a narrative device to celebrate this new industrial power, and as ornamentation to showcase the associated wealth, was becoming commonplace. The 1888 International Exhibition elevated the success of stained glass in Glasgow. J&W Guthrie's design studio was gaining notoriety with their close ties to the successful Glasgow Boys movement, and Hugh McCulloch's studios with their vast explorations in colour.[5]

This redefinition of stained glass as a decorative device was popular in the domestic environment and the accompanying wealth of these private commissions allowed for experimentation by the stained glass studios. McCulloch studio's employment of the designer E. A. Taylor caused controversy with a large domestic window drawn almost entirely in lead lines and composed of opalescent glass.[6] McCulloch studio went on to execute all the glass for the Room De Luxe in the Willow Tea Rooms, with the controversy surrounding their domestic stained glass seen as a factor in gaining this commission from Mackintosh. Another designer who executed work for Mackintosh was George Walton. Unlike many of the designers above, excluding Cottier, he is an example of a designer diversifying their medium rather than being exclusively a stained glass designer. He executed the first of leaded glass and copper panels for Miss Cranston's Argyle Street Tea Rooms, incorporating glass into his decorative schemes as insets in furniture and glazed panelling. The commission for the stained glass at the Mack was carried out by six design studios including both J&W Guthrie and McCulloch.[7]

The route to stained glass revival in Glasgow is of vital importance. The move away from the copying of medieval style with the continued experimentation taking place in the glass studios led to the formation of a new style of modern glass. This was notable for; strong colour harmonies, use of lead lines for definition, experimentation with composition, and the redefinition of the narrative and subjects suitable for decorative glass. The strength of the studios in Glasgow during this revival contributed to the popularity and prevalence of stained glass.

When Mackintosh's use of stained glass is seen in this context, it is not a significant shift away from the expected use within an institutional setting. However, Mackintosh differs from this on two counts. Firstly, he designed his own stained glass rather than relying upon the designers within the stained glass studios. This is clear as his designs undoubtedly bear his distinct authorship, further evidenced by cartoons in his hand. Secondly, the subjects and narrative depicted in his stained glass panels are not typical for the time. It would be expected that the stained glass would

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[5] See Michael Donnelly, *Glasgow Stained Glass: A Preliminary Study* (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1981). See also *Scotland's Stained Glass: Making the Colours Sing* (Edinburgh: The Stationary Office, 1997).

[6] Donnelly, *Glasgow Stained Glass,* 29.

[7] Office Job Books for Honeyman & Keppie, p.121 – 131, 1894 – 1905, GLAHA 53061, Mackintosh Collection, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow. http://www.mackintosh-architecture.gla.ac.uk.

reflect the Glasgow School of Art or were statements to celebrate the school's experimentation with this medium. However, the narratives behind the stained glass designs are obscure, seeming to reflect a personal expression over one of ornamentation or a clear narrative regarding the institution. To ascertain his intentions for the role of stained glass in the Mack, a clarification of terminology is needed.

Figure 1. Stephen Adam, *The Boatbuilder*, 1878, Stained glass. Maryhill Burgh Hall Trust, Glasgow. Source: http://www.maryhillburghhalls.org.uk.

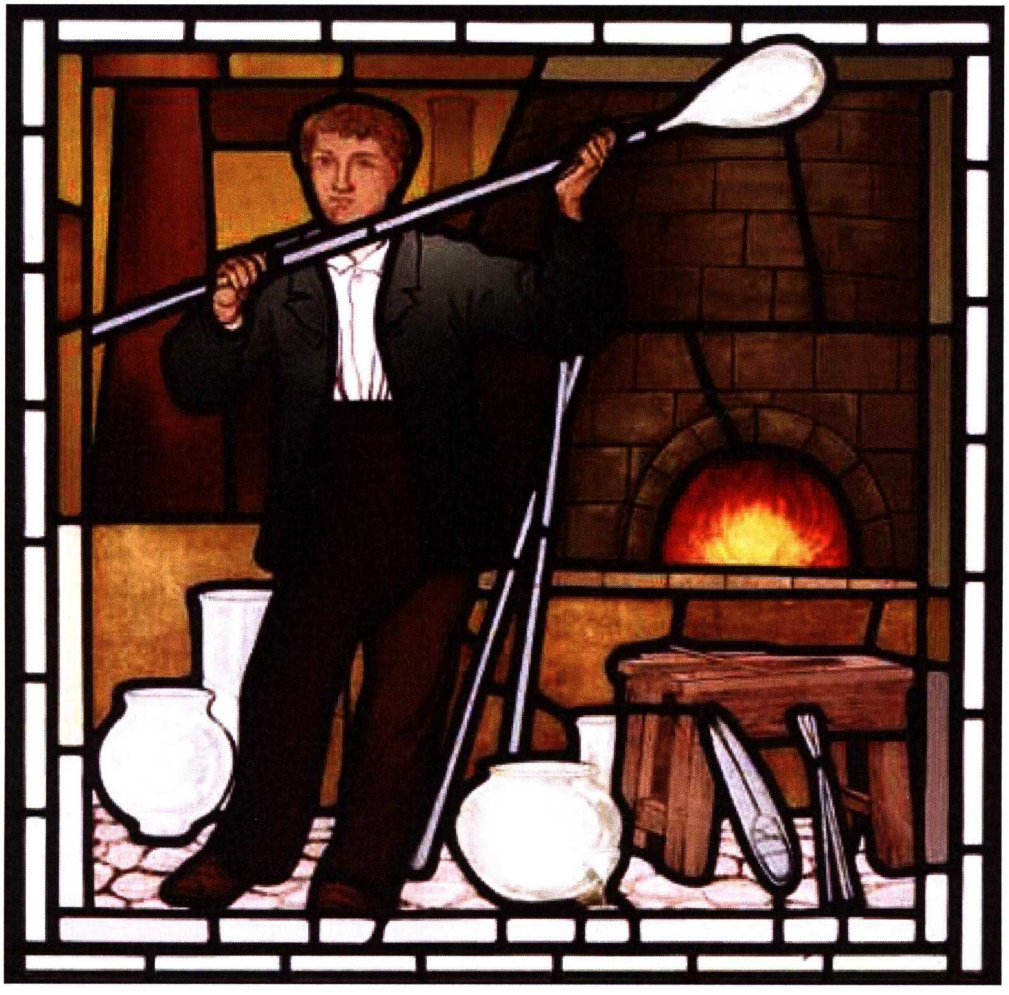

Figure 2. Stephen Adam, *The Glassblower*, 1878, Stained glass. Maryhill Burgh Hall Trust, Glasgow. Source: http://www.maryhillburghhalls.org.uk.

3. DEFINING THE TERMS

In order to explore this discussion on stained glass, the two distinct meanings of the word *symbolism* need to be defined.

> 1. symbolism - The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities.
> 2. Symbolism - An artistic and poetic movement or style using symbolic images and indirect suggestion to express mystical ideas, emotions, and states of mind.[8]

These both apply when trying to contextualise Mackintosh's experimentation within the nineteenth century alongside the historical context of stained glass within Christian Art.

Definition of the first meaning relies on semiotics as symbolism is frequently used as a colloquial term referring to iconography, a sign system, in the visual arts. The components of a sign can be split into two parts: the *signified* – the concept which it represents (a horse for example) and the *signifier* – the form which the sign takes (the word 'horse'). This was further categorised into three stages; the *representamen* which is the sign, although not necessarily physical, which has a relation to the *object* it is signifying, which then creates the *interpretant* which is the interpretation in the mind. This triad of classification is of importance as it can be used to define the object into these categories; a *symbol* is when the signifier does not resemble the signified, an *icon* is when the signifier can be perceived as resembling the signified, and an *index* is when signifier is directly connected to the signified.[9] In the context of this discussion *symbol* and *symbolism* will strictly be in reference to this classification as an image which does not directly resemble the idea it is representing.

Iconography alone may not be enough for comprehension as it does not consider the context. Iconology takes the wider context surrounding the artist into consideration in order to interpret the symbolism in their work. These can take the form of their previous bodies of work, the political and historic context they were working in and who the work was commissioned for.

The second meaning of Symbolism is the artistic and poetic movement appearing in the mid nineteenth century as a reaction against advancing industrialisation. The movement was preceded by the Pre-Raphaelites and is connected to, but distinct from, Romanticism. The movement emerged without a fixed place of origin and primarily in literature. However, the defining manifesto of Symbolist work was one of mysticism, unreality and otherworldliness with visual works depicting the illustration of poems and the insubstantial nature of dreams. Myths are a

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[8] *Concise Oxford English Dictionary,* 11th ed., s.v. "symbolism."
[9] Paul Cobley, and Litza Jansz, *Introducing Semiotics* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 1999) 10,11, 21-35.

common collective of stories, retaining their recognisable aspects when retold. The Symbolists layered these illustrations of poems and myths with another, personal, ethereal reimagining without losing the recognisable references but neither adhering precisely to their retelling.[10] The movement utilised symbolism, inventing a new language of symbols personal to the artist. Although Mackintosh's experimentations directly with these Symbolist themes were brief, they must be taken into consideration for their impact on Mackintosh's broader work. This is an influence which an iconographical approach alone would not have addressed.

This distinction between iconography and iconology must be defined due to the history of stained glass design. Traditionally, stained glass in Christian Art was interpreted through iconography, an example being a dove as a symbol for the Holy Ghost, fully understood by the congregation. However, during the nineteenth century stained glass became a popular form of decorative art no longer restricted to ecclesiastical use or subject. It was commonplace in domestic and institutional buildings to show wealth or to depict idealised narratives of the recent industrialisation. Unlike medieval stained glass, the glass from this period cannot be interpreted solely through this definitive iconography due to external influences, such as Japanese art, being incorporated into the designs.[11]

When considering the smaller panels from the Mack in isolation, the risk is to interpret them either as an experimentation in stylised plant motifs or to attach a meaning purely through iconography. This is not to say that these considerations are entirely without substance, as he was clearly experimenting with stylisation and would have been fully aware of the connotations behind his botanical motifs. Yet these approaches ignore the context and complexity revealed in the larger panels which cannot be explained in such definitive terms. As Mackintosh's stained glass was not conceived solely as ornamentation, nor as a narrative in either the cotemporary or historical format, this raises the question of the role and narrative behind the stained glass in the Mack.

[10] Michael Gibson, *Symbolism* (London: Taschen, 1999).
[11] Donnelly, *Scotland Stained Glass,* 34-35.

4. ORNAMENTATION, MYSTICISM AND ARCHITECTURE

The nineteenth century stance on architecture is best explained by the change in direction for the continuity of British architecture towards an insular approach, focusing on British history in opposition to guidance being sought from overseas. The culmination of this was the Battle of the Styles questioning the perceived authenticity between the Gothic and Classical revivalists, summarised as 'the national and the rational'.[12] In Scotland, Gothic revival manifested itself as Scottish Baronial. The division between these distinct stances could not be maintained which gave way to a hybridisation of architectural style and ornamentation. Books provided templates of decorative designs that would be applied with no adherence to the previous rigours associated with each defined style. Mackintosh was well aware of the debate surrounding the styles and spoke publically in opposition to pastiche architecture, describing it as 'a childish mimicry' in his lecture in 1892.[13] He also clarified his intentions towards an alliance with notable critics calling for the establishment of a new architecture 'to unite the beauties of all in one modern style'.[14]

4.1 FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

Alongside this architectural heritage, Mackintosh's education at the Glasgow School of Art was formative in shaping his stance towards ornamentation. The appointment in 1885 of the Englishman Francis H. Newbery as Director lead the school in a new direction. The fundamentals of which are as follows. An awareness, and later independence from, the South Kensington System thus securing autonomy and relative freedom for the funding and curriculum at the school. An endorsement of local talent with the focus being towards artists advancing the city of Glasgow.[15] Lastly, regarding architectural teachings, his agenda endorsed the late Victorian ideologies in the creative arts of nature, material, labour and technique which reinforced the attitude towards architectural history where the past styles were now a source for inspiration, not a reproduction nor rigidly confined to the styles.[16] These ideologies were largely based upon the teachings of John Ruskin, which were referenced continuously by Mackintosh throughout his lectures.[17]

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[12] Robert Macleod, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architect and Artist,* rev. ed. (London and Glasgow: William Collins Sons, 1983), 17.
[13] Pamela Robertson, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Architectural Papers* (Oxford: White Cockade, 1990) 188.
[14] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 198.
[15] Hugh Ferguson, *Glasgow School of Art: The History.* (Glasgow: The Foulis Press of Glasgow School of Art, 1995) 48-51.
[16] Macleod, *C.R.M. Architect and Artist,* 23-25.
[17] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,*182-183.

During his enrolment at the Glasgow School of Art, Mackintosh took more than the expected amount of subjects covering a wide variety of disciplines. Alongside drafting and drawing, he studied practical workshop skills in woodwork, metalwork and plaster modelling, excelling in both life drawing and plaster modelling. Although no records are obtained to clarify this, it is assumed that he had knowledge in the technical subjects of mechanical or structural engineering as he calculated his own steelwork for the Mack. His study of Design Ornamentation can be seen as a subject of note when regarding his stained glass design. The syllabus contained pattern geometry, historical, textile and wallpaper design where Mackintosh would have experimented with stylisation of motifs in repeated design.[18]

Returning to the idea of national identity being fundamental in architectural design during the nineteenth century, it is important to stress that the notion of national identity is based upon myth and perceived traditions. Mackintosh's stance aligned with the attitudes expressed in Lethaby's text: *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth.* This was heavily referenced in the central body of a untitled lecture on architecture given by Mackintosh in 1893.[19] Mackintosh echoed many of Lethaby's principles regarding the power architecture derives from symbols and tradition. He portrays architecture as having a mythology, whilst acknowledging that the original interpretation of these contributing factors that formed this mythology are not always clear in retrospect. Even if the understanding of the formative ideas dictating the architecture is through a translation, 'a half remembered tradition' he advocates the importance of this awareness.[20]

Mackintosh regarded the reuse of the old mythologies applied to contemporary design as lacking dignity, and advocated the invention of new mythologies that reflected the contemporary environment.[21] He adopted these key stances; architecture as a collective of all the crafts based upon the teachings of Ruskin, a shift away from the direct copying of nature towards its use as a new narrative for contemporary architecture, and the difference between *building* and *architecture* with architecture elevated to the 'thought behind form'.[22]

Mackintosh's stance regarding nature differed from the teachings of Lethaby. He disagreed on new mythologies being formed from a direct imitation of nature amending this quote from Lethaby 'If we trace the artistic forms of things, made by man, to their origin, we find a direct imitation of nature'.[23] His amendment was recorded in his lecture in 1893 as 'If we trace the artistic forms of things made by man to their origin, we find a direct inspiration from if not a direct imitation of

[18] Ferguson, *Glasgow School of Art,* 61-62.
[19] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 201-211. See also William Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (London: Percival & Co, 1892).
[20] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 206, See also Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth,* 6.
[21] Ibid., 207.
[22] Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth,* 1. See also Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 202.
[23] Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth,* 4. See also Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 188.

nature'.[24] This shows a disposition against directly imitating nature in decorative design, but an alliance with the concept of nature forming a new narrative in architecture.

4.2 FIGURATIVE WATERCOLOURS

The manifestations of these ideals are explored initially in his student work. He already showed promise at botanical drawing before his enrolment at the Glasgow School of Art and continuously produced botanical watercolours to a high standard throughout his lifetime.[25] This interest in botany clearly inspired a great deal of his motifs. They were stylised into stencils, forming the decoration in his furniture and subjects in his stained glass, all converging under his wider architectural schemes. His work also shows signs of experimentation with Symbolism, through a personal redefinition of symbols, that hint at these underlying ideals mentioned in his lectures.

This underlying narrative is better understood by considering the profound influence on Mackintosh by his peers. He formed close acquaintances with Herbert McNair and Margaret and Frances Macdonald. Encouraged by Newbery, they begun a series of collaborative efforts culminating in their publications of *The Magazine*. Their first group show at the student summer exhibition in 1894, presented together in the section for Arts and Crafts, provoked controversy in the local press.[26] The Macdonald's sister's ethereal depictions, androgynous figures and otherworldly oeuvre were the probable cause of the comments and must have contributed to the description of their work as being part of a 'Spook School'.[27]

Collectively their work was retrospectively classified as the Glasgow Style and speculations of their influences have since been widely voiced. These categories have included: Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau and, for Mackintosh's architecture specifically, as a precursor to Modernism (a once popular stance, now discredited).[28] For the Macdonald sisters, influences have been attributed to Aestheticism and the Pre-Raphaelites. Much overlooked, yet still relevant to the collaboration between Margaret Macdonald and Mackintosh in their decorative schemes, is the influence and experimentation with Symbolism. The influence of Symbolist and Art Nouveau contemporaries in Europe (Aubrey Beardsley, Jan Toorop and Carlos Schwabe) and that of artists closer to home (the

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[24] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 204-205.
[25] Pamela Robertson, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Art is the Flower* (London: Pavilion Books, 1995).
[26] Press cuttings volume, Mitchel Library D499407, 47. From Pamela Robertson, *Dove and Dreams: The Art of Frances Macdonald and James Herbert* McNair (Glasgow: Hunterian Art Gallery University of Glasgow, 2006) 33.
[27] Robertson, *Dove and Dreams,* 33.
[28] See Macleod, *C.R.M. Architect and Artist,* 7. For the literature linking Mackintosh and Modernism see: Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement,* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977). For insight into Mackintosh's criticism towards a utilitarian dismissal of ornamentation, see Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 184-185.

Glasgow Boy's George Henry and E. A. Hornel) is detectable.[29] Parallels have been drawn between the portrayal of other worlds, elongated figures, mystical themes and spiritual subjects. Yet the significance of the imagery in the group is one of their own conception. It is important to acknowledge that this style was at its intensity in the work of the Macdonald sisters.[30]

In regards to their experiments with Symbolist themes there is a stark difference when comparing the work of Margaret Macdonald with that of Mackintosh. Firstly, Margaret's body of work consistently engages with these Symbolist themes, unlike the brief exploration by Mackintosh in a small collection of early watercolours. Secondly, Margaret's work was bolder and more committed to these themes, her work often exploring literary topics around otherworldliness.[31] Lastly, Mackintosh's work was more stylised than that of his peers, the Macdonald sister's and Herbert McNair, and even from the varied manifestations of Symbolist work throughout Europe.

His exploration with obscure imagery manifests itself in several of his early watercolours. Two watercolours were produced in 1895 entitled *The Tree of Personal Effort* and *The Tree of Influence*. An accompanying explanation is elusive as they were published in *The Magazine* with no other supporting text. It has been assumed that their relevance would have been apparent to the student readers at the time.[32] Both watercolours have subjects unlike work produced by Mackintosh before or afterwards, although retain his recognisable style.

From these watercolours these assumptions about the influence of the Symbolist manifesto have been made. His imagery was not as developed compared to the Macdonald sisters. His themes were less defined by literature, especially subjects relating to despair and dreams in which the Macdonald's produced exceptionally complex imagery in their work. Finally, that his figures, although stylised, are less distorted than the Macdonalds.

Crucially, his work still incorporated stylised natural motifs. In addition to the two watercolours mentioned above, this can be seen in *The Harvest Moon* (1892), *The Descent of Night* (1894), *Cabbages in an Orchard* (1894) and *Winter* (1895). These explored more understandable themes, with the exception of *Cabbages in an Orchard* (1894) which, without its original intentions to accompany it, the narrative remains elusive.[33] He ceases his figurative watercolours on these themes and they become mainly landscape or botanical in subject with the focus shifting onto pattern, line and composition. However, the influence of these themes cannot said to be lost as his

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[29] Robertson, *Dove and Dreams*, 34.

[30] Roger Billcliffe, *Mackintosh Watercolours* (London: John Murray, 1979) 11.

[31] See Robyne Calvert, "A walk in Willowwood: Decoding the 'Willowwoods' of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh," *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History* 17 (2012): 24-31.

[32] The Magazine (vol. 4, 1896), Mackintosh Art, Design and Architecture Collection, MC/A/15, Glasgow School of Art Archives. http://www.gsathemagazine.net. See also Billcliffe, *Mackintosh Watercolours*, 12.

[33] The Magazine (vol. 4, 1896), Mackintosh Art, Design and Architecture Collection, MC/A/15, Glasgow School of Art Archives. http://www.gsathemagazine.net.

work progressed. These strong ties to the medieval, fairies and mystical figures remain still detectable in his decorative works, but are never again expressed so emphatically.[34]

The shaping of his attitudes around ornamentation and mysticism in these formative years cannot neglect the debate surrounding architectural style and the profound influence of Newbery. Newbery's efforts to reform teaching at the Glasgow School of Art were immense, setting the direction of the school onto a new track, supplementing Mackintosh's architectural education with broader craft disciplines. Mackintosh's stance on architecture as a culmination of crafts must be partially, if not substantially, attributed to the pioneering directorship of Newbery, acknowledged by Mackintosh, alongside the teachings of Ruskin, in his lectures.[35]

Looking at his student work, the sources for many of his motifs become apparent. The classes he undertook, his work in *The Magazine* and the lectures he gave established his interest in repeated pattern design and nature. They also allude to a disposition towards mysticism in architecture.[36] Contextualised with the work of his peers, Symbolist themes provide a source for the underlying obscurity of his designs. His peers had a profound influence on his approach to architecture, further strengthened by his matrimony to, and collaboration with, Margaret Macdonald. Collectively their invention of a new, personal language reiterates the need for an understanding of context over an iconographic approach. In regard to his stained glass panels, their composition of stylised motifs has recognisable sources, yet their intention and narrative cannot be ascertained as easily.

[34] Billcliffe, *Mackintosh Watercolours,* 13, 77.
[35] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 182, 183, 208.
[36] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 180-211.

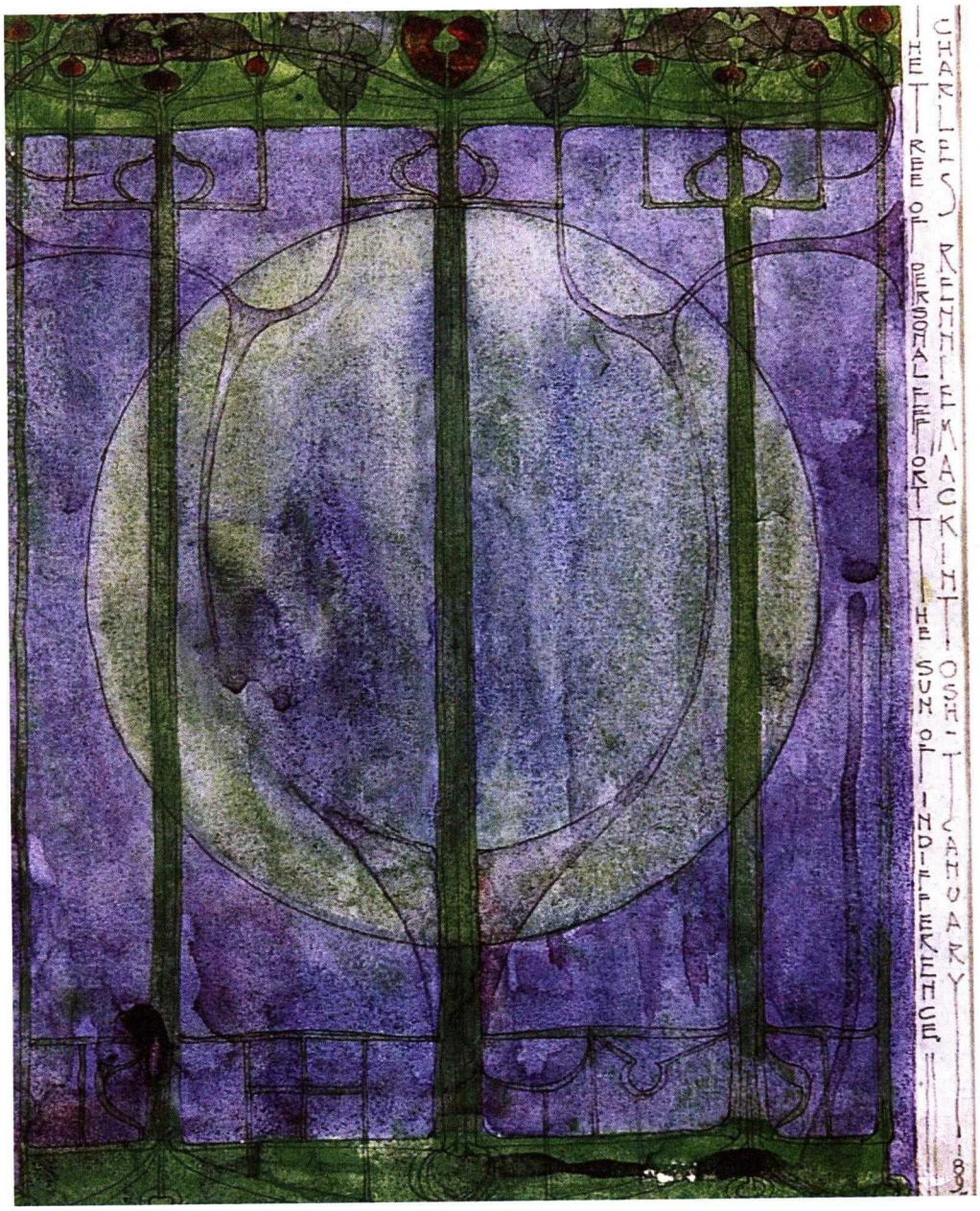

Figure 3: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Tree of Personal Effort*, 1895, Pencil and watercolour on paper, 213 x 173 mm. Collection: Glasgow School of Art. MC/G/8. Source: Roger Billcliffe, *Mackintosh Watercolours*. London: John Murray, 1979, 68.

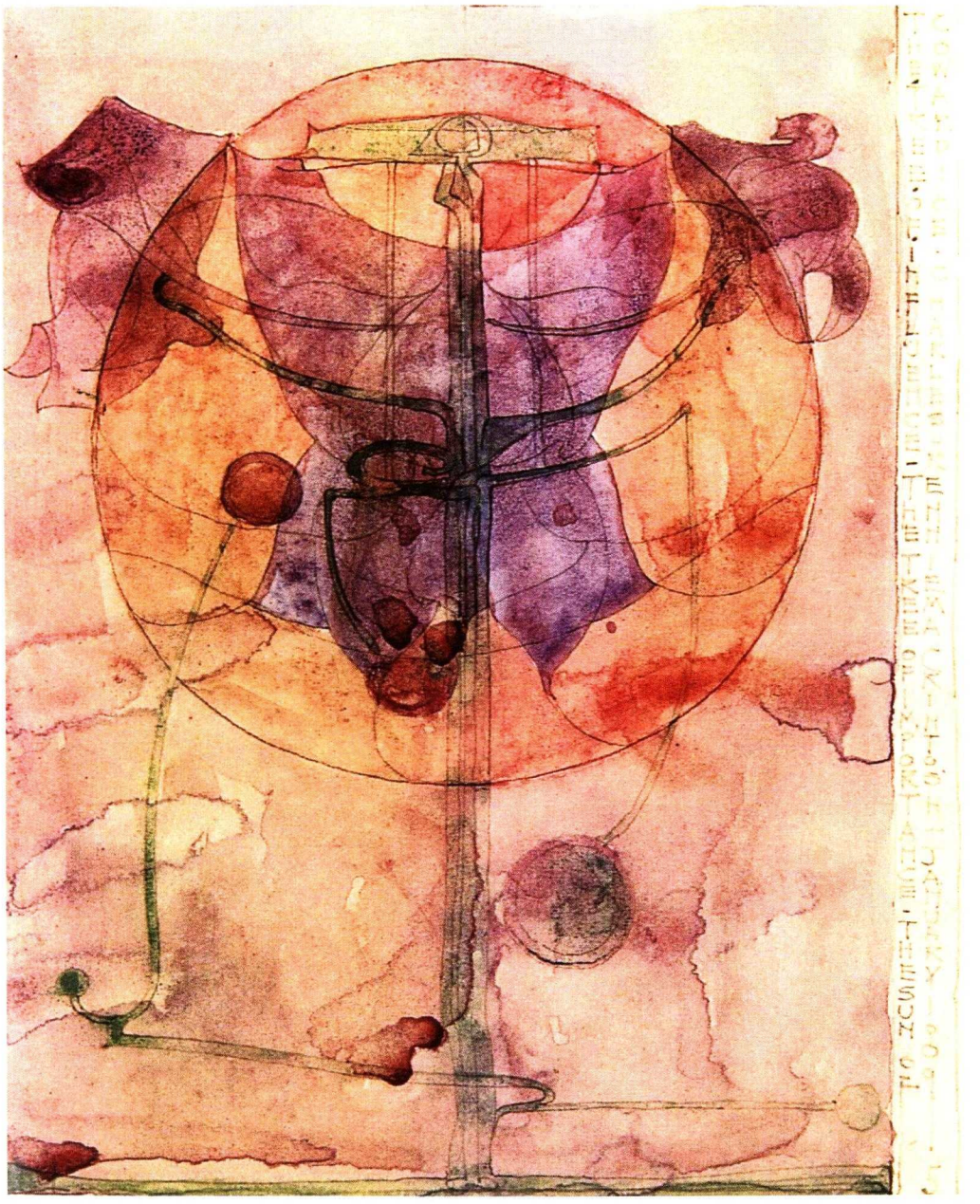

Figure 4. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Tree of Influence*, 1895, Pencil and watercolour on paper, 212 x 170 mm. Collection: Glasgow School of Art. MC/G/9. Source: Roger Billcliffe, *Mackintosh Watercolours*. London: John Murray, 1979, 69.

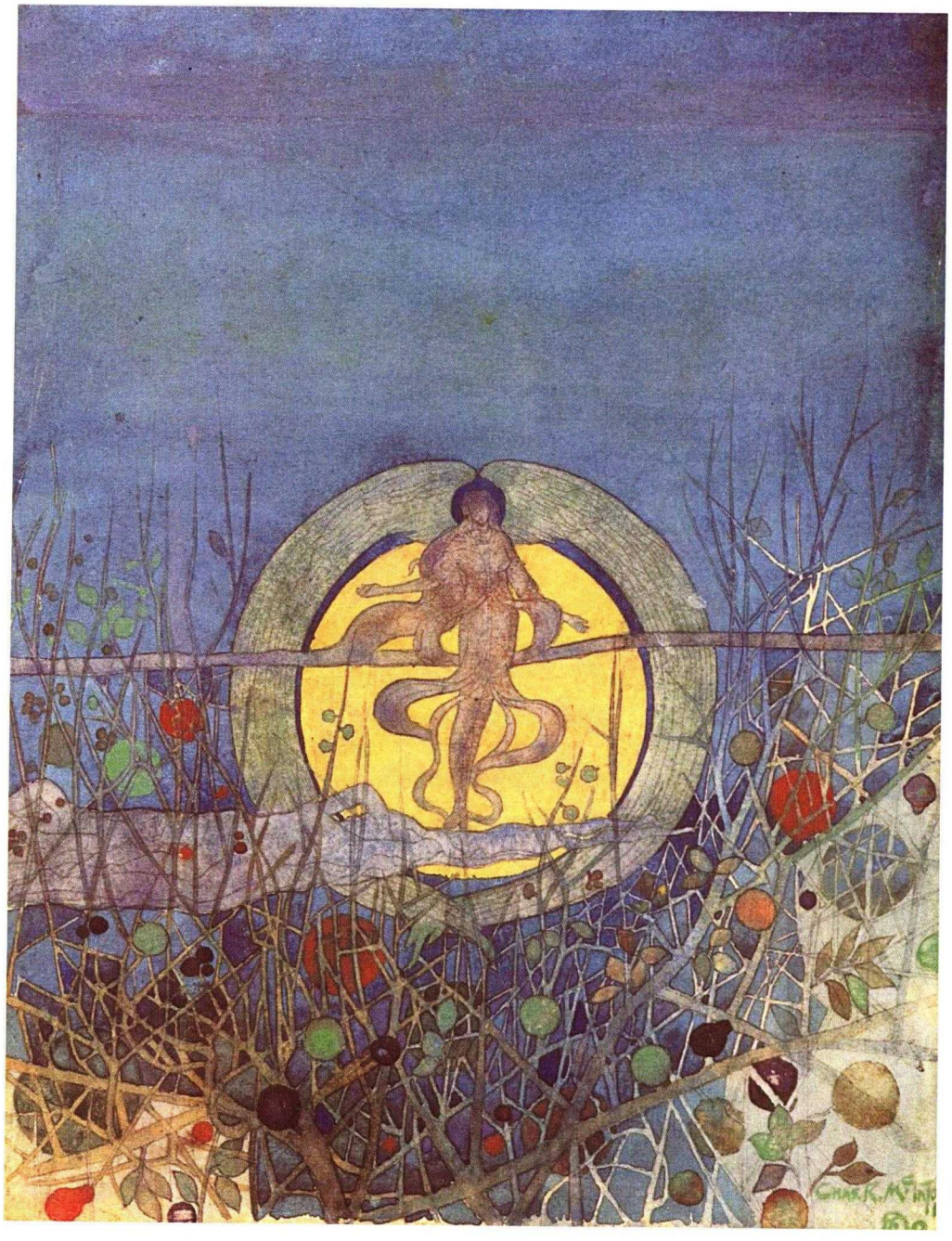

Figure 5. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Harvest Moon*, 1892, Pencil and watercolour on white paper, 352 x 278 mm. Collection: Glasgow School of Art. MC/G/2. Source: Roger Billcliffe, *Mackintosh Watercolours*. London: John Murray, 1979, 58.

Figure 6. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Descent of Night*, 1894, Watercolour on paper, 235 x 166 mm. Collection: Glasgow School of Art. MC/G/3. Source: Roger Billcliffe, Mackintosh Watercolours. London: John Murray, 1979, 59.

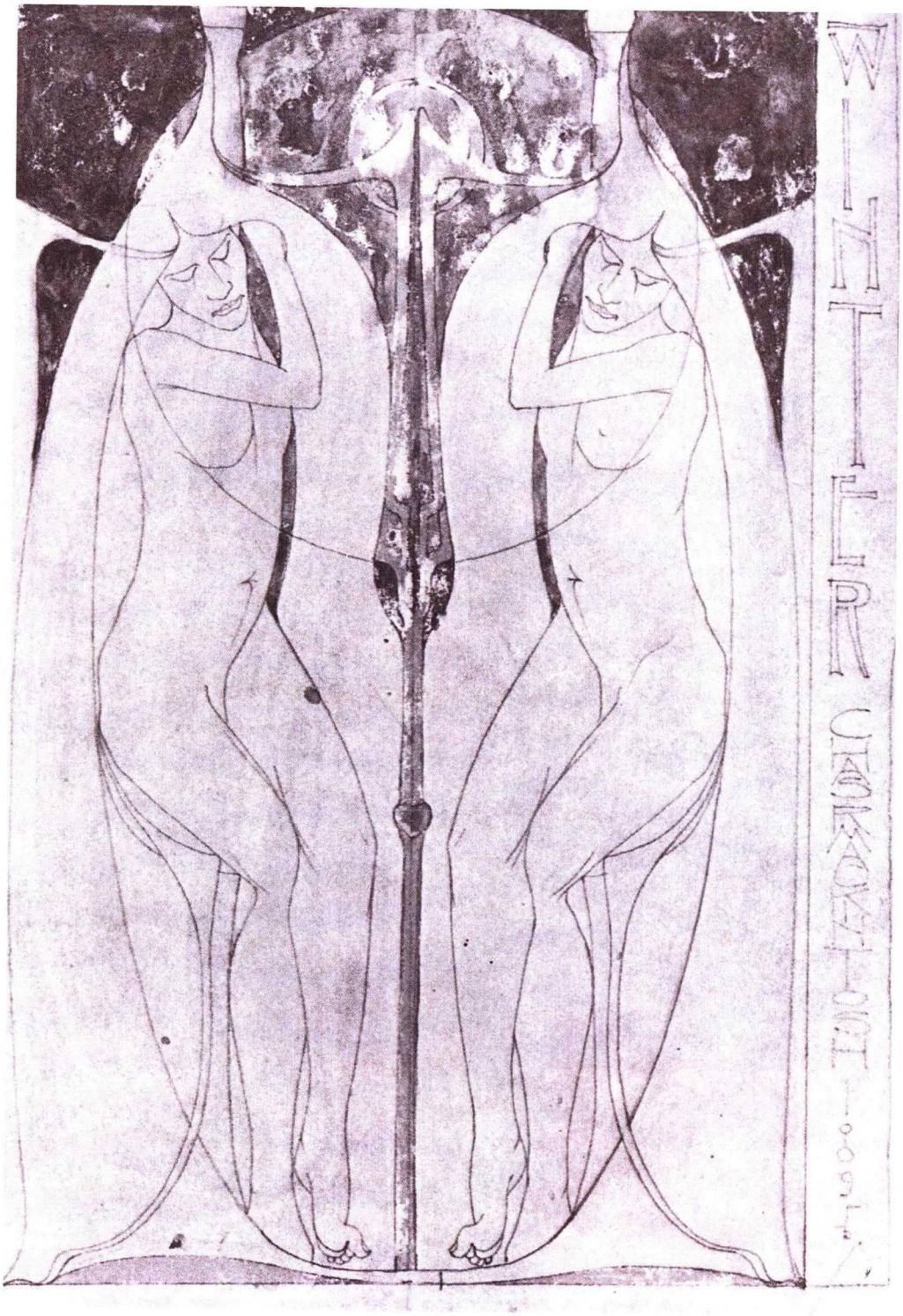

Figure 7. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Winter*, 1895, Pencil and watercolour on tracing paper, 290 x 210 mm. Collection: Glasgow School of Art. MC/G/10. Source: Roger Billcliffe, *Mackintosh Watercolours*. London: John Murray, 1979, 64.

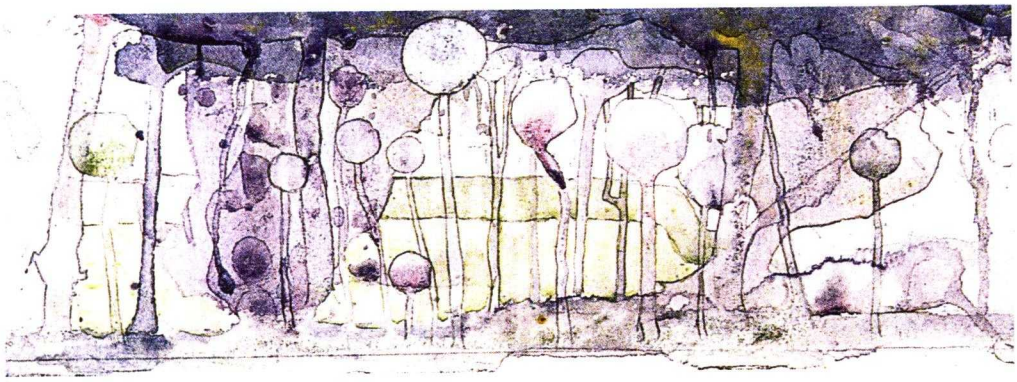

Figure 8. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Cabbages in an Orchard*, 1894, Watercolour on paper, 86 x 235 mm. Collection: Glasgow School of Art. MC/G/4. Source: Pamela Robertson, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Art is the Flower*. London: Pavilion Books, 1995, 25.

5. STAINED GLASS IN THE MACK

Mackintosh's use of stained glass varies between decorative relief as insets in furniture and light fittings, to his more elaborate stained glass panels. In order to determine the role of stained glass in the Mack beyond ornamentation, the focus will be on the panels that show recognisable motifs. Although his use is extensive it is unwise, considering the nineteenth century context, that too much emphasis be placed in trying to read symbolic meaning in the small insets.

It is important to note that his use of stained glass is more evident in the east wing of the Mack, the first phase designed by Mackintosh between 1896 and 1899.[37] This means that the east wing show some early examples of his stained glass. He wielded a considerable amount of design control continually making adjustments during the first phase of construction, resulting in the budget rising above the original stipulation of £14,000. The west wing was undertaken with the caveat imposed by the Board of Governors that the architects were 'not at liberty to instruct any extra work or any alterations on the plans or specifications'.[38] The stained glass in the west wing is in keeping with the east but there is a contrast in the richness to his drawings which suggest restraint, as seen in Figure 9 and Figure 10. This could be attributed to both the financial and design restrictions imposed on Mackintosh. It may also contribute towards the ongoing debate behind the perceived change in design between the east and west wing. It would be difficult, without additional investigation, to comment further on this as the acknowledgement alone of the difference between the stained glass from east to west cannot carry considerable weight as the context of financial restriction during the second phase of construction could adequately explain this anomaly.

As the design of the Mack occurred in the early stages of his career, what retrospectively appear as reoccurring motifs in his wider work had early manifestations in the first phase of the Mack. This considered, these early stained glass examples deserve investigation as they precede the more complex stained glass, exemplified in his schemes for the Willow Tea Rooms. This investigation will be formed around six examples of his stained glass across differing locations within the Mack, varying in scale and complexity.

The motifs depicted across the stained glass have a clearly botanical source, but an iconographic approach relies upon a certain level of speculation due to the extent to which the plants are stylised. This makes tracing the motif back to a specific specimen difficult. The prevalence of the rose motif can help to demonstrate other issues surrounding an iconographic approach as it has been used across a wide range of settings and schemes. He emphasises the connotations of the rose in The

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[37] Nicky Imrie, Joseph Sharples and Pamela Robertson. *Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning.* Glasgow: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, 2014. http://www.mackintosh-architecture.gla.ac.uk.

[38] J.J. Burnet to W.F Salmon, 19 January 1907, GSA archives, box A/7/2. Found in James Macaulay, *Glasgow School of Art Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architecture in Detail* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993) 5.

Rose Boudoir for the Turin Exhibition in 1902, showing appropriate awareness of symbolism expected in the nineteenth century. This symbolism was present in the visual arts and widespread in Victorian society, exemplified though an enthusiasm towards the Language of Flowers.[39] Yet exploitation of these connotations seem like a deliberate design decision made by Mackintosh, rather than a rigid adherence to this symbolism. The rose motive in the Mack is difficult to comprehend if viewed from the iconographic standpoint as the symbolism hardly seems fitting for an institutional setting. Neither can it be fully justified by regarding the panels as simply a decorative device. Exploration of these motifs through comprehension of their context, his influences, design approach and development of a personal imagery can provide insight into his intentions.

[39] Kate Greenaway, *Language of Flowers* (London: George Routleage and Sons, 1884) 35, 61, 68.

Figure 11. Director's Room, photograph by Bedford Lemere, 1910. © RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.

Stained glass features prominently in the Director's Room located centrally in the plan on the first floor. The stained glass takes the form of small lily pad shaped inserts in the uppermost panel of the white painted doors leading into the room, the cloakroom and the cupboard doors lining the east wall. There are variations of the motif between these different placements, yet all the designs depicted in the stained glass can be considered to be botanical. The glass in the doors comprise of a curving lead *stem* and *head,* resembling tulips or wheat, and a grouping of uneven lead lines forms a bunch of *stems*, balancing the composition, illustrated in Figure 12. The glass is either tinted a pale green or is milky white.

The glass in the cupboard doors comprise of five central lead lines, terminating in an oval with the curved shape of the panel offset below in lead. The upper section of glass is royal blue in colour. These glass panels are integral to the decorative scheme for the Director's Room and formed the main source of ornamentation. Although the motifs were not mirrored directly in the furniture, the stained glass echoes the curves present throughout the room, in the partition to the stairs and the large bay window, providing a unity to the scheme.

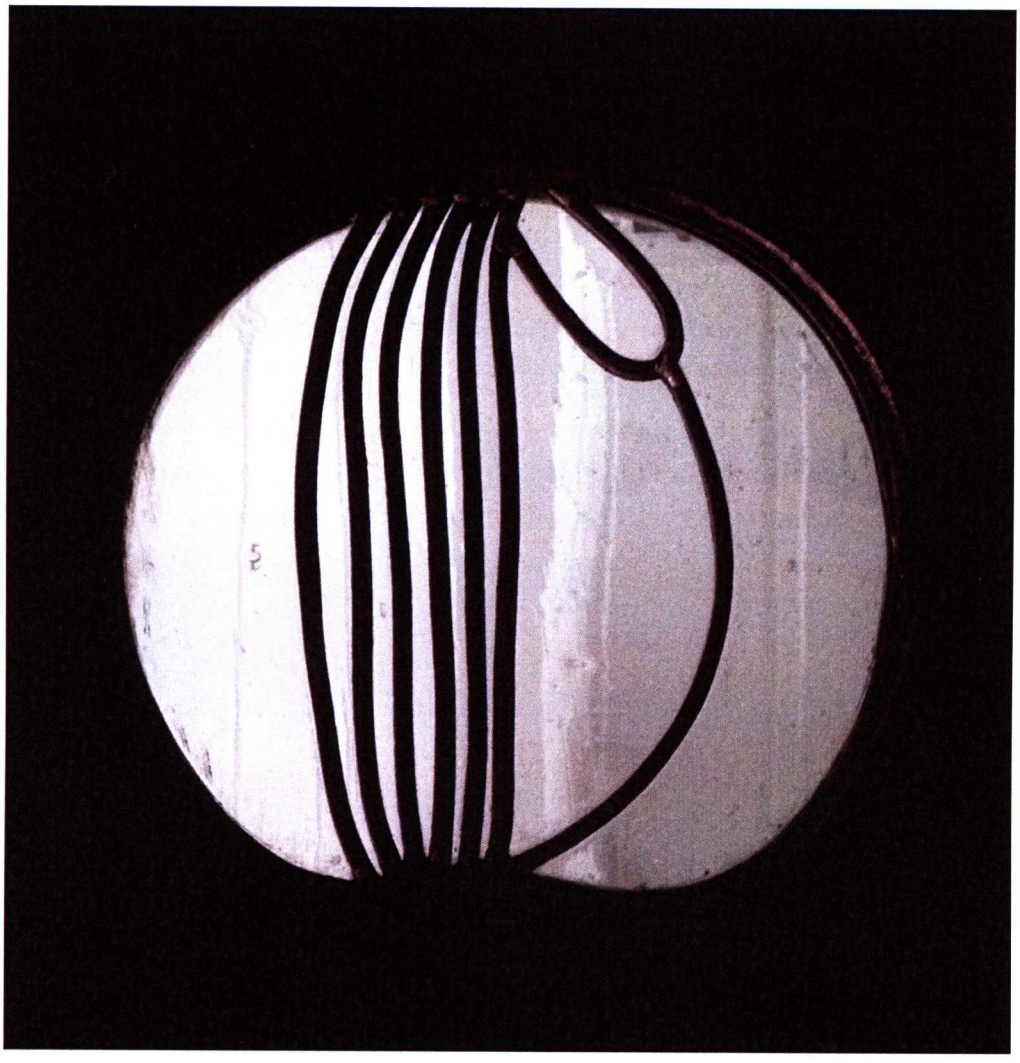

Figure 12. Stained Glass, Director's Room. Source: Author's own.

5.2 ENTRANCE HALL, EAST WING

The rose motif appears in the doors off the staircase to the south of the Entrance Hall, located centrally in the plan. The doors led to the Gentleman's and Ladies Luncheon Rooms, located between ground and first floor level, separated by the staircase and joined only through a narrow kitchen. The glass consists of small, winged pieces situated just below the top rail of the white painted doors, illustrated in Figure 13. They consist of a single stylised rose motif in red glass with the image defined entirely in lead lines.

There are no photographs of these rooms showing his original scheme due to their status as service spaces, and there is no evidence in the building fabric that the motif was continued in either of the Luncheon Rooms, neither is the motif prevalent in the stairwell or Entrance Hall. This suggests that the purpose of the stained glass was to relate the two doors to each other, creating a harmony in the routes off the stairwell.

5.3 GROUND FLOOR EAST WING

In contrast to the Luncheon Rooms, the Master's Room and the Mistress's Room have a far more elaborate stained glass scheme. Both doors leading into the rooms have wide triangular shaped stained glass in the top door panels, illustrated in Figure 14. The corners are rounded with the lead lines echoing these curves in tinted yellow glass. Horizontal lead lines divide the panel into two with a small triangular form at the apex, also defined in yellow glass.

These are some of the most obscure stained glass motifs in the Mack, with their subject, and therefore narrative, subject to speculation. However, as with the Director's Room, these motifs are carried on throughout the scheme, leading to indications of subject. These are the only rooms to incorporate free standing timber partitions, reminiscent of his later tea room designs. It is on this open timber partition on the south wall that a floral, possibly tulip, motif is formed from the woodwork. This would indicate the stained glass to be floral in subject. If the section illustrated in Figure 9 is correct, then the frieze sketched roughly by Mackintosh would have made the ornamentation in these rooms exquisite, possibly an early experiment of his later tea room designs.[40]

[40] Research into this room is still in progress. It has become an area of research interest during the course of the restoration, with Dr Robyne Calvert proposing the possible tulip motif for this area.

Figure 13. Stained Glass, Luncheon Rooms. Source: James Macaulay, *Glasgow School of Art Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architecture in Detail* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993) 41.

Figure 14. Stained Glass, Master's Room. Source: Author's own.

Figure 15. Original Board Room Converted to Studio, photograph by Bedford Lemere, 1910. © RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.

The scheme for the Board Room was a white, panelled room, lit from both the east and west with curving bay windows. It was decidedly feminine when considering the usual dark oak panelled rooms considered appropriate for such uses in the nineteenth century, providing an explanation for the Board of Governors dislike of the room. During the second phase of the Mack, this board room was superseded and the new Board Room was commissioned. This incorporated dark oak panelling seemingly more fitting to the Board's taste leaving the former Board Room to be used as a studio, shown in Figure 15.

Adding to the femininity of the room was his decorative scheme of stained glass. These were situated in the doors leading into the room and those leading to anterooms. They took the form of small triangular panels situated just below the top rail of the white painted doors, illustrated in Figure 16. The motif looks botanical with lead lines forming a central bunch of *stems* in the centre of the panel, with the triangular glass at the apex being either blue or green tinted. A point of interest is that the tinted glass is rough, uncut lead glass. These small iridescent tints of colour show Mackintosh's attention to design and material. This expense is understandable for the main door, but is an unusual extravagance in the door leading into the anteroom.

Figure 16. Stained Glass, Former Board Room. Source: Author's own.

Figure 17. First Floor corridor looking West, photograph by Bedford Lemere, 1910. © RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.

The rose motif is incorporated in the later phase of the Mack in the adaptions to the first floor studios. They consist of pairs of leaded windows in the half glazed doors on the entrances leading into the large Antique Studio, also known as Studio 40, shown in Figure 18. The head and foot of the panels are delicately curved, contrasted with strong vertical *stems* of lead lines. The panel is split horizontally into a triptych with the rose motif in red glass occupying the topmost panel. The white milky glass is set against the dark double doors. The same leaded windows are present in the doors to a storage cupboard to the west of the studio. Stained glass similar to the small triangular panels in the former Board Room is also repeated in a door leading to a small anteroom.

This use of stained glass provides unity in the long top lit corridor leading from the museum. However, the use of stained glass in peripheral spaces, such as the storage cupboard, indicate an underlying intention to design rooms as a coherent whole. In the context of the Mack this is emphasised by the lack of hierarchical order in the location of the stained glass.

Figure 18. Stained Glass, Antique Studio. Source: Author's own.

5.6 GROUND FLOOR STUDIOS, EAST WING

The most intricate stained glass in the Mack is located on the ground floor leading into Studio 25, Studio 26 and the Gentlemen's Cloakroom. They are pairs of oval, milky leaded windows that fill over half of the double doors and are set dramatically against the dark woodwork - see Figure 20. Divided horizontally into four, the two uppermost sections depict a woman, her figure formed with sinuous lead lines, with a rose motif at her feet. The red glass of the rose motif is set symmetrically either side of her face amongst her hair which is defined in a light brown glass. Her facial features are formed by the lead lines and the overall composition of the panels are asymmetrical.

There is no evidence of the rose motif echoed in either studio or the cloakroom. They announce the entrances into the two large studios, but their placement in the cloakroom door defies a hierarchical order. This suggests that the use of stained glass was to provide unity to the ground floor corridor and to balance the ornamentation aesthetically. These intricate panels are of interest, because they correspond to a surviving cartoon by Mackintosh, but crucially the presence of a human figure rather than botanical motif calls into question the narrative behind their design.

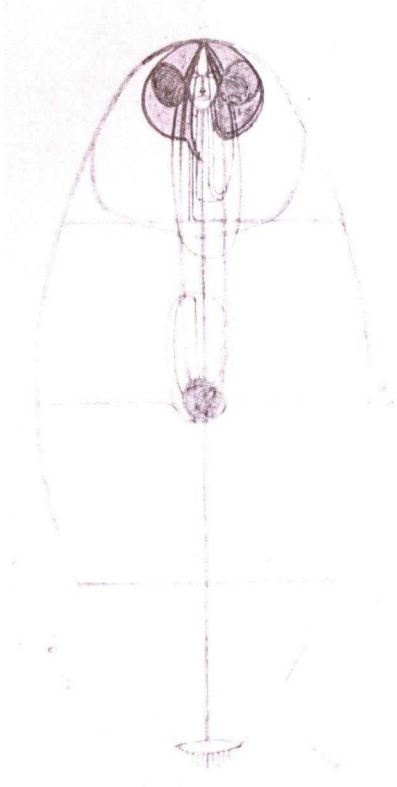

Figure 19. Cartoon for Leaded Glass Doors. Source: Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings & Interior Designs,* 3rd ed. (Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 1986), 69.

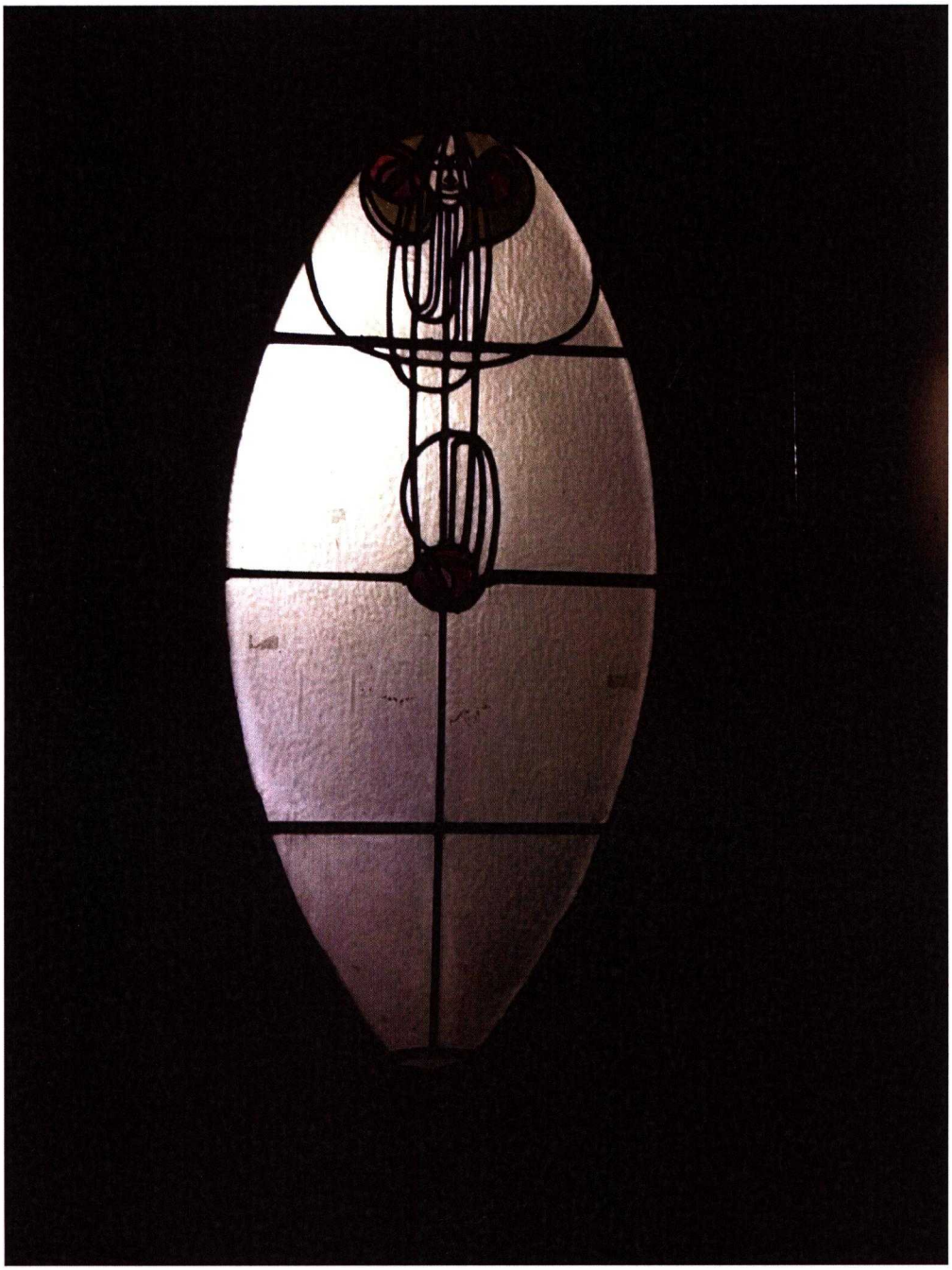

Figure 20. Stained Glass, Ground Floor Studios. Source: Author's own.

The location of the stained glass throughout the Mack is indicative of his approach to ornamentation. There is a lack of hierarchy in the stained glass placement as it is not just confined to the main entrances of the most important rooms. This indicates that his use of stained glass was not simply for ornamentation but as part of a broader scheme. Stained glass is repeated within the rooms, regardless if the door is leading to the principal space or a peripheral cupboard. This is also apparent in the use of stained glass in the corridors, with the Luncheon Rooms and Gentlemen's Cloakroom bearing no sign of these motifs within, instead providing an aesthetic coherence to the circulation spaces, retaining the grandeur of these spaces.

There is a loose hierarchy in the spaces he chose to consistently use stained glass, shown with the prevalence in the Director's Room and the large Antique Studio. The collective use of stained glass is evident when looking at the sectional drawings, illustrated in Figure 9 and Figure 10, suggesting an awareness of this as a unifying medium. This is further supported by the consistency in the composition of the panels through the use of lead lines and stylised natural motifs, with the rose taking precedent. The positions of the stained glass and their relation to the wider scheme partially inform their intended role in the Mack, but cannot answer the questions arising over the narrative behind the more intricate designs.

6. DETERMINING INTENTION AND NARRATIVE

Mackintosh's cohesive design approach is clearly shown through the location of the stained glass, yet the figurative motif in the ground floor studios suggests another underlying intention. This motif is not immediately legible in relation to the Glasgow School of Art suggesting a personal source underlying this narrative. This can be explored through further analysis of his opinions, voiced through the manuscripts of lectures he gave, predating the design of the Glasgow School of Art.

In his lecture in 1892 he touched upon the notion that understanding, and therefore appreciation of, architecture could only be achieved through the placing of oneself in the position of the intended audience at the time of the building's conception. He expresses this opinion by proxy as a large section of his lecture is lifted straight from the second chapter of *The Stones of Venice* by Ruskin. The text concerns itself with a discussion into the need for understanding the origins in architectural design and begins with an analogy of music. This acknowledges that the subtleties of the intentions behind a piece of music are difficult to ascertain unless the listener has been informed of them prior to the recital. He continues to quote Ruskin as he applies this analogy to architecture.

> A building which recorded the Bible history by means of a series of sculptural pictures, would be perfectly useless to a person unacquainted with the Bible beforehand: on the other hand the text of the old & new Testaments might be written on its wall yet the building would be a very inconvenient type of book, not so useful as if it had been adorned with intelligible and vivid sculpture.[41]

This firstly acknowledges that ornamentation plays a pivotal role in the expression of these intentions and that without understanding the context, the intention of the building is obscured.

It is not merely the symbols present in the architecture that contribute to this understanding. He echoes Ruskin to advocate that until 'we can place ourselves in the position of those to whom the expression was originally addressed & until we are certain that we understand every symbol, and are capable of being touched by every association' then it is not possible to truly understand the architecture.[42] His choice to quote Ruskin reveals his disposition as an architect towards an approach to design that is formed through, and expressive of, an understanding of context and influence. It also acknowledges his opinion of the inherent importance, but not reliance upon,

[41] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 199. See also John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice,* vol. I (London: George Allen, 1903) 50.

[42] Ibid.

symbols as one of the methods used to express all the vast associations connected to the design of architecture.

This proves fitting advice for the interpretation of his own design of the Mack, and the stained glass within. He returns to this notion in a later lecture in 1893 and this continued repetition suggests that this was a fundamental influence forming his stance towards ornamentation and architecture. His lectures show an awareness of the power that architecture derives from symbolism and tradition, and there is no reason to doubt that he deviated from this stance when undertaking his own design work.

He uses his lecture in 1893 to trace the influence of the cosmos on the ancient Egyptian, Grecian and Roman temples. Far from trying to argue for a spiritual connection to all architecture he used these historical influences to emphasise that 'buildings were enshrined in ideas'.[43] He aligned his views with Lethaby's in *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* that new architecture needed these underlying ideas, but that the ancient ideals should not be the same for contemporary architecture. He advocates that 'old architecture lived because it had a purpose'.[44] He summarises that using these symbols, new or ancient, to discover the formative influences in architecture is not a direct path, that interpretation can be 'more or less translation, sometimes first hand, often as a half remembered tradition'.[45]

He clarifies his belief that his contemporaries should turn to nature to form these new traditions, citing his approval of this in the work of Norman Shaw and John Sedding, amongst others. His insight into ornamentation specifically is captured in a plea to the artists he is addressing, for their appreciation of architecture. He urges them to think and feel with the architect, so that when instructed to paint a panel they do so 'as part of the whole'.[46] This provides evidence that he conceived all of his design work as a cohesive whole. His cross-section for the initial design of the Glasgow School of Art, shown in Figure 9, includes the sketch designs for the stained glass throughout and a frieze in the Master's Room. This suggests that ornamentation was conceived in the early stages of the design.

This could start to explain his move into a personal symbolism for the stained glass. If he viewed the stained glass as part of a whole, it is not unlikely this would extend to encompass his own explorations into the redefinition of architecture. If he had viewed ornamentation in the traditional, or even the nineteenth century context, as a decorative or informative device, the resulting stained glass should have been very different. To disregard the stained glass as a decorative device alone is to ignore the stance, advocated by Mackintosh himself, that architecture needs underlying beliefs. This suggest that it would be worth viewing the stained glass less in isolation to the

[43] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 205. See also Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth, 6.*
[44] Ibid., 206.
[45] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 206.
[46] Ibid., 208.

architectural context of the Mack and more within the wider context of his artwork to uncover a unity throughout his designs.

6.1 NARRATIVE

Mackintosh worked on the design for the Glasgow School of Art between 1896 and 1899, around the same time he was experimenting with Symbolist themes in his figurative watercolours.[47] He was using watercolour as a way to explore themes regarding nature, otherworldliness, myth and tradition. Regarding his design approach, it can be assumed that this would have extended into his stained glass. His advocacy for the unity of all the associations and crafts that combine to form architecture would fit with this deduction into his approach to ornamentation.[48]

Regarding the subject of his panels, his experimentations with the stylisation of plant forms has already been established, illustrated in Figure 22 and Figure 21. He began stylising plant forms in his sketches, developing a style that continues throughout his botanical illustrations. In his student work he incorporates his ability to stylise natural motifs to compile abstracted compositions that reoccur throughout his work.

His interest in creating pattern and motif from nature can be seen through his ideological standpoint and as a result of his exposure to, and interest in, repeated pattern design. This inspiration from nature is seen throughout his work in many forms, from early sketches to his stained glass and later textile designs. This reflected that his use of nature was ornamental, but importantly, abstracted. His stained glass at the Mack, viewed retrospectively within his wider catalogue of work, can be seen as an experimentation, both ideologically and architecturally.

An iconological study of the figurative motif in the ground floor studios can begin to establish Mackintosh's intended narrative. The narratives behind his watercolours such as *Part See Imagined Part* (1896) in Figure 23 and *In Fairyland* (1897) in Figure 24 can be used to provide context. This context was implied either explicitly, through descriptions accompanying the pieces, or implicitly through titles and subject. These are just two examples where a central female figure, enshrined in natural forms is evident in Mackintosh's work.

His watercolours express a decorative, whimsical aspect, less stylised than the figurative panels in his stained glass, that allude to an underlying narrative formed around otherworldliness. His experiments with the topics of fairies and imagined worlds is less direct than that of the Macdonald sisters. Their work was more attuned to the Symbolist manifesto and literary sources, exploring a

[47] Nicky Imrie, Joseph Sharples and Pamela Robertson. *Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning.* Glasgow: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, 2014. http://www.mackintosh-architecture.gla.ac.uk.
[48] Robertson, *The Architectural Papers,* 201.

malevolence not seen in Mackintosh's work. From this it is possible to understand that these figures, although used as a way of exploring ethereal themes, were also a key component in Mackintosh developing his decorative style.

With this considered, when trying to determine a narrative for the ground floor leaded glass in the Mack, the focus should be less about the figure itself and more towards an understanding that it is a motif reinterpreted, stylised and explored elsewhere. This duality of use, for decoration and for exploration of wider themes, reiterates the notion that the Mack was an experiment in synthesising his beliefs, design approaches and influences into an architectural resolution. It would explain why the figurative glass seem out of context in an institution, as they are an indication of a wider narrative being explored by Mackintosh.

The original themes are therefore best understood through his figurative watercolours and not directly through his stained glass versions of them. It is of course impossible, without clear written evidence from Mackintosh, to fully comprehend the intentions behind his designs for the stained glass. However, as these experimentations in figurative watercolours were taking place around the time he was designing the Glasgow School of Art, they can act as a guide to the narratives depicted in the glass.

The overlap between Mackintosh's art and his architecture is evident, yet it was also a continuous process, detectable in the schemes he designed during and after the Glasgow School of Art. *The Wassail* (1900) understood to be his last figurative watercolour, bears a striking resemblance to the central figure in the most intricate stained glass in the Mack, repeating the sinuous lines forming the figure and the placement of roses in the hair, this echoed in his tea room designs.[49]

In these later tea room commissions for Miss Cranston there was collaboration with Margaret Macdonald.[50] As this was not the case in the Glasgow School of Art, her more explicit figurative themes cannot be used to inform the narrative. However, comparison in their student work provides further insight into the shared themes and, although contrasting in style, the themes within Margaret Macdonald's stained glass panel *Summer* (1893) and Mackintosh's *Autumn* (1894) is encouraging. It suggests an ongoing exploration happening in parallel between Margaret Macdonald and Mackintosh of nature, dreams and the intangible. It was approached by both artist and architect through differing mediums with distinct styles and purposes, forming a response to their nineteenth century context through a shared, personal symbolism.

[49] Billcliffe, *Mackintosh Watercolours,* 13.
[50] See Calvert, "A walk in Willowwood," 24-31.

6.2 COMPOSITION

The stained glass in the ground floor studios show similarities in composition to his figurative watercolours. The common theme of vertical emphasis, seen in Figure 23 and Figure 24, is used consistently throughout his stained glass in the Mack. The stained glass was a take on these compositions worked on at a similar time, and show the process of stencilling and simplifying.

His stained glass, unlike historic examples, did not take precedent over his architectural design and a hierarchy of intricacy in his artwork was clearly in order. His watercolours were the most detailed, with simplification for practical applications such as posters and stained glass. Figures 25 and 26 incorporate this central figure but show stylisation compared to the watercolours in Figure 23 and 24. This relates to Mackintosh's approach to design and purpose, as his ideological experiments were also tempered with practicality. For stained glass this meant that the design had to be simplified in order to be achievable with only coloured glass and lead lines - the design did not rely on painted detail. This was an approach being explored in the stained glass studios throughout Glasgow and this process of stylisation can be seen through his ink lines being translated directly into lead.

Regarding composition, the stained glass in the Mack all share basic unifying factors. These are a collection of vertical lead lines terminated by an apex, a face or usually a stylised flower head. The consistency of themes and composition in his stained glass further emphasise this duality with his designs being both decorative and abstracted. Understanding this duality infers that stained glass is best viewed as a design, carefully considered and continually experimented with, but permeated with wider, ethereal narrative detectable through his figurative watercolours.

The utilisation of stained glass had a clear purpose architecturally in the Mack providing unity through ornamentation across the scheme. The narrative behind the designs of the stained glass however, only start to become apparent when contextualised with formative influences expressed through his lectures, artwork and collaborations. With the understanding that his stance on architecture was one that encompassed all art, craft and contemporary associations, it is not unexpected to find a commonality of intentions between his figurative watercolours and his stained glass designs.

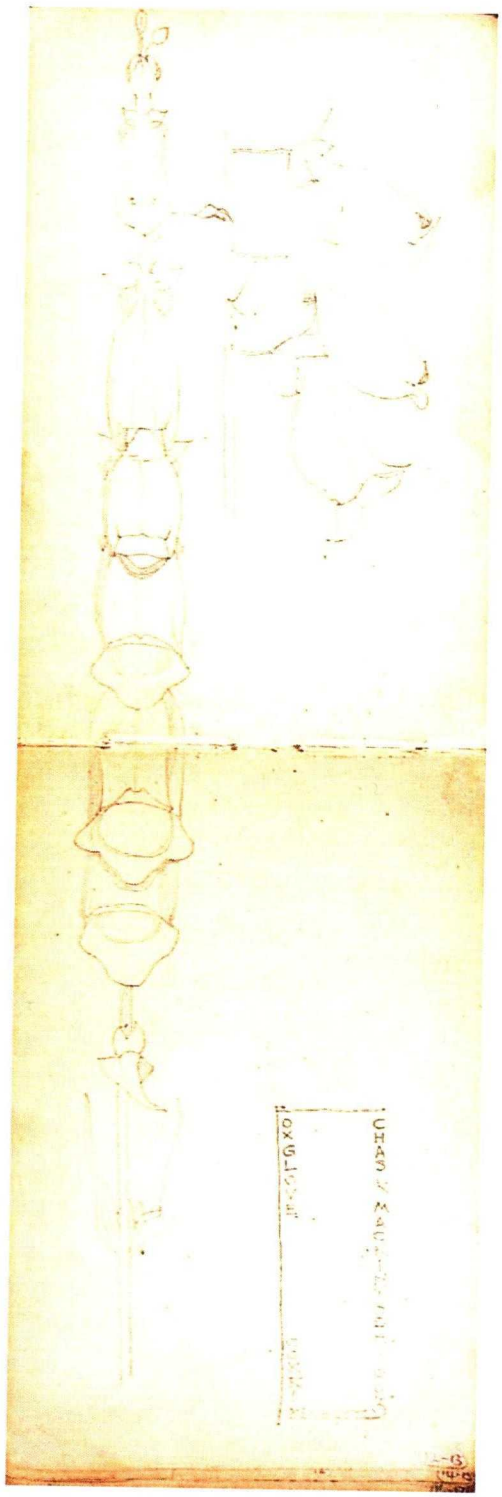

Figure 21. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Foxglove, Corrie, Arran*, 1895, Pencil on paper, 344 x 114 mm. Mackintosh Collection, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow. GLAHA 53012/6. Source: Pamela Robertson, Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Art is the Flower. London: Pavilion Books, 1995, 14.

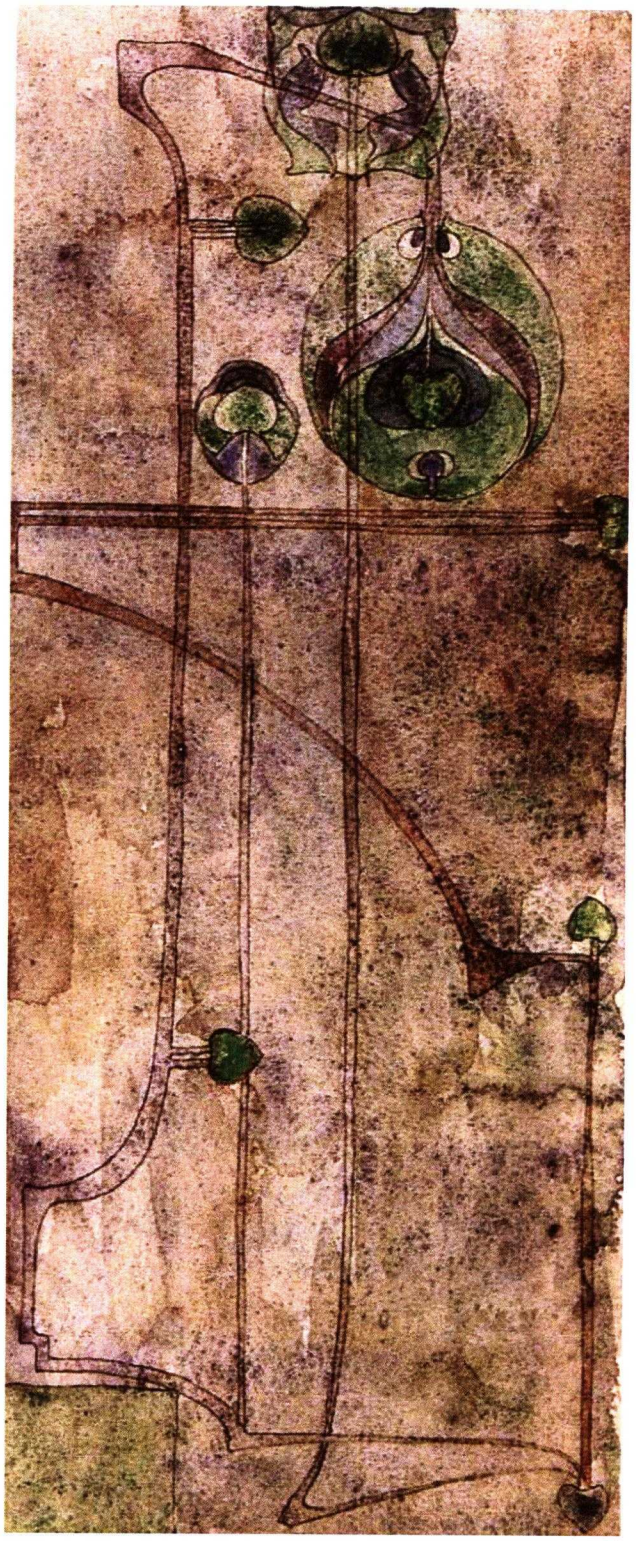

Figure 22. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Stylised Plant Form*, 1894, Watercolour and pencil on paper, 257 x 105 mm. Collection: Glasgow School of Art. MC/G/5. Source: Pamela Robertson, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Art is the Flower*. London: Pavilion Books, 1995, 27.

Figure 23. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *In Fairyland*, 1897, Pencil and watercolour, 370 x 176 mm. Private Collection. Source: Roger Billcliffe, Mackintosh Watercolours. London: John Murray, 1979, 77.

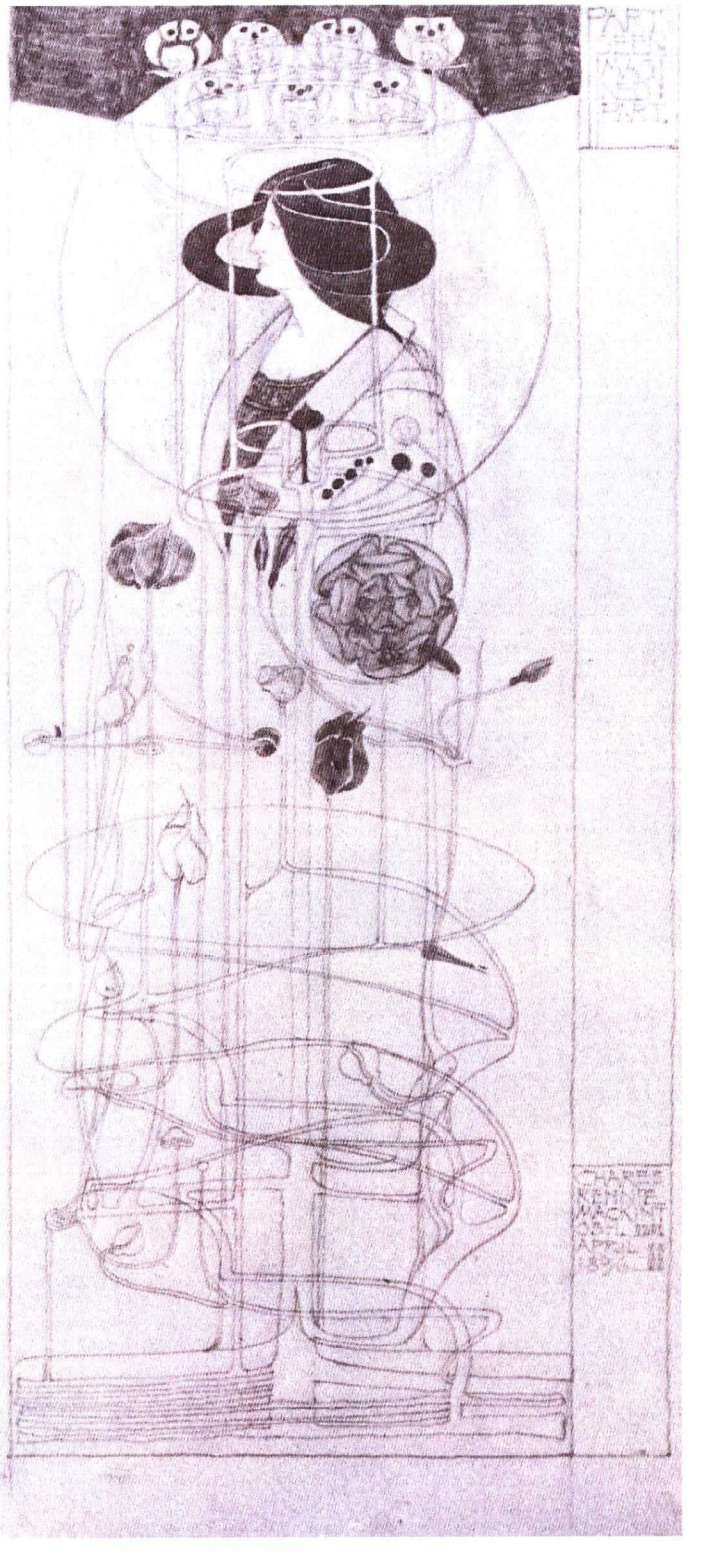

Figure 24. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Part Seen Imagined Part*, 1896, Pencil and watercolour on tracing paper, 390 x 195 mm. Glasgow Art Gallery. Source: Roger Billcliffe, Mackintosh Watercolours. London: John Murray, 1979, 71.

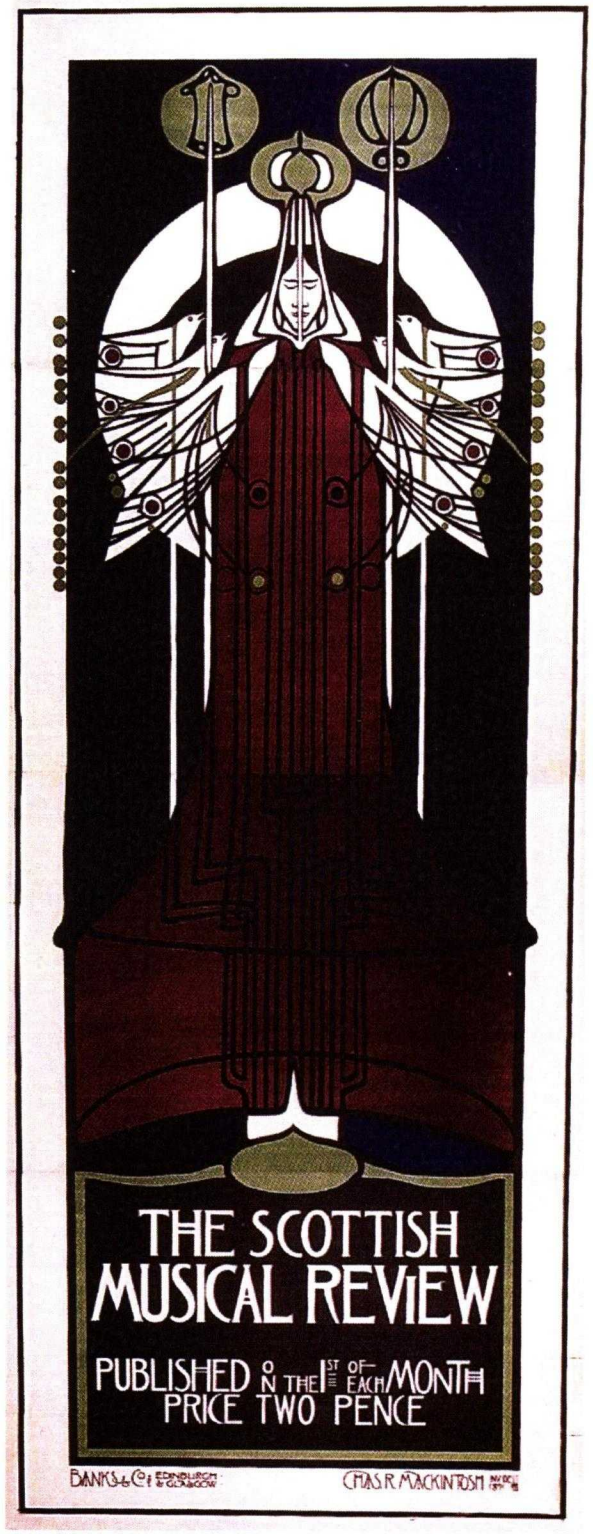

Figure 25. Poster for 'The Scottish Musical Review' 1896, Colour lithograph, 2400 x 950 mm. Mackintosh Collection, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow. GLAHA 52563. Source: Pamela Robertson, Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Art is the Flower. London: Pavilion Books, 1995, 28.

Figure 26. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Autumn*, 1894, Pencil and watercolour on buff David Cox paper, 285 x 135 mm. Collection: Glasgow School of Art. MC/G/6. Source: Pamela Robertson, Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Art is the Flower. London: Pavilion Books, 1995, 27.

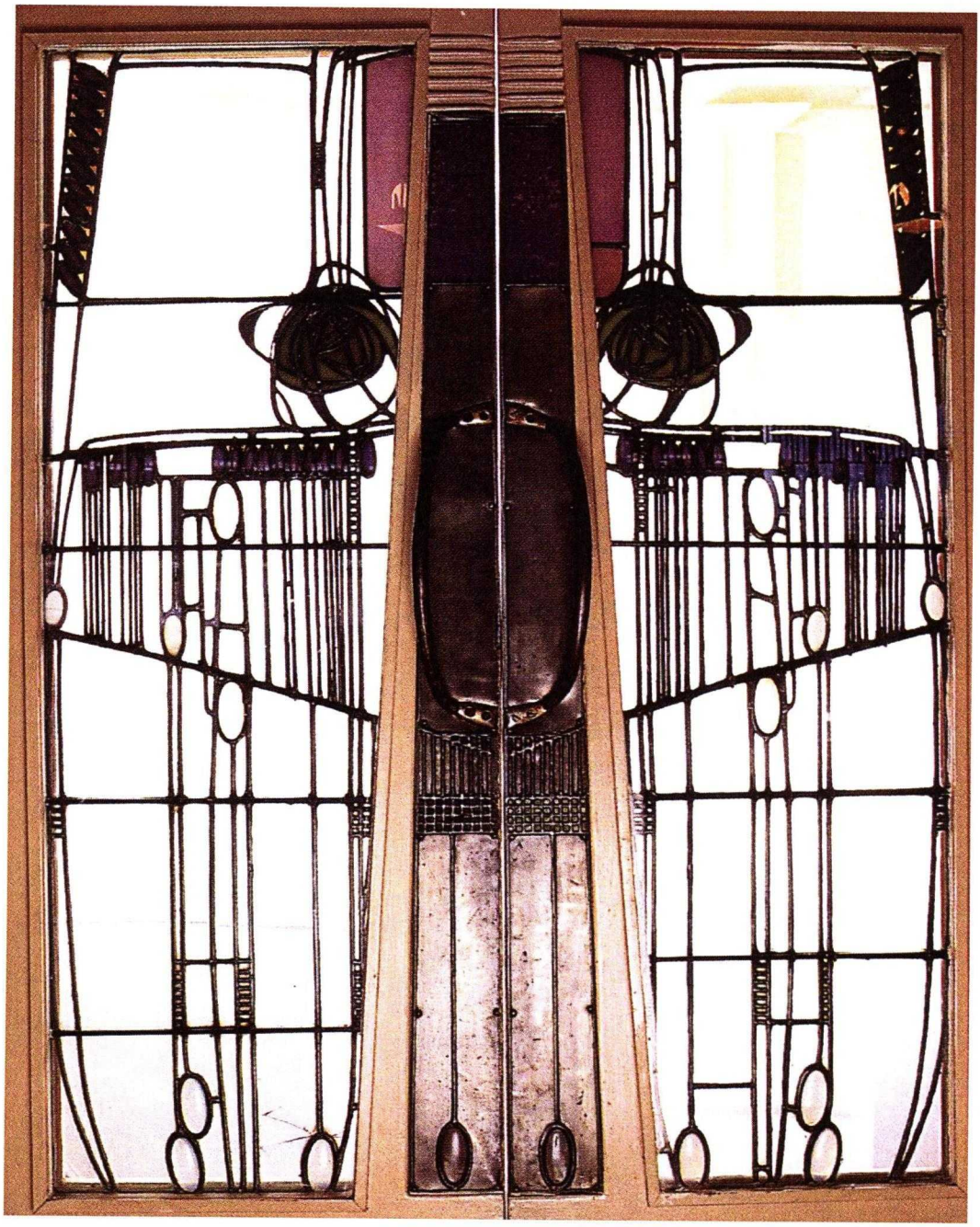

Figure 27. Doors, Room de Luxe, Willow Tea Rooms, Glasgow, 1903, Leaded glass. The Glasgow Picture Library. Source: Pamela Robertson, Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Art is the Flower. London: Pavilion Books, 1995, 89.

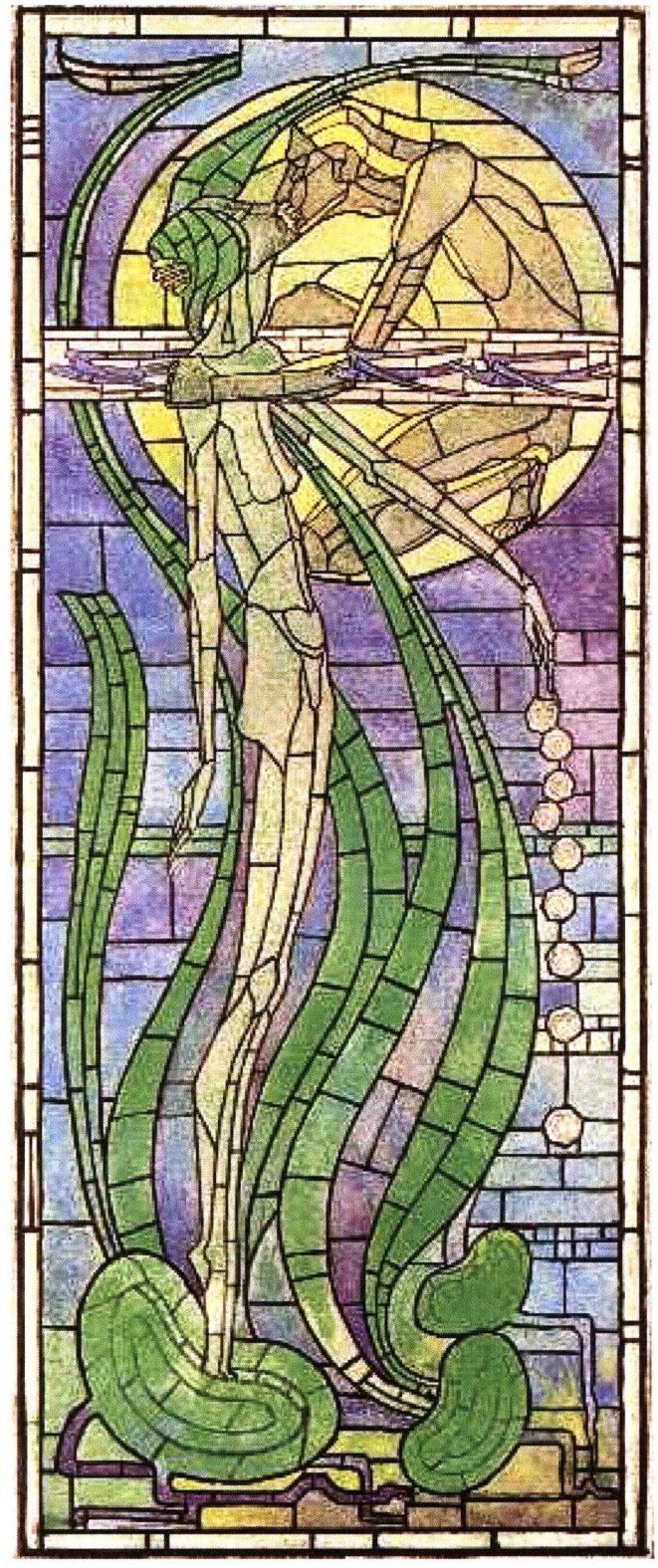

Figure 28. Margaret Macdonald, *Summer*, 1893, Pencil, pen and ink and watercolour, 517 x 218 mm, Mackintosh Estate, University of Glasgow. Source: Roger Billcliffe, Mackintosh Watercolours. London: John Murray, 1979, 62.

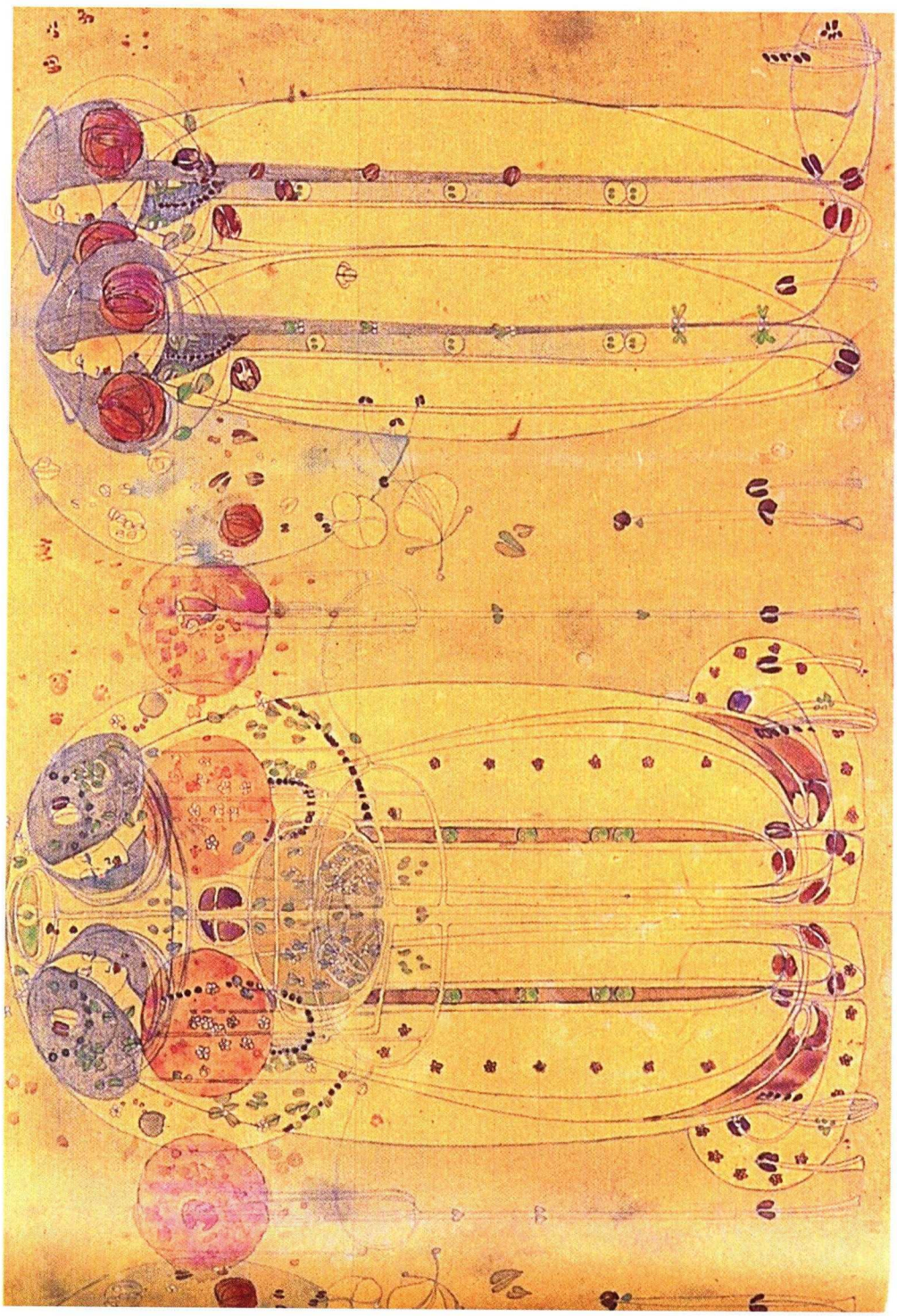

Figure 29. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Wassail*, 1900, Pencil and watercolour on tracing paper, 320 x 680 mm. Collection: Professor T. Howarth. Source: Roger Billcliffe, Mackintosh Watercolours. London: John Murray, 1979,

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, to determine the role of stained glass in the Mack it is was essential to understand Mackintosh's work in context. His work was created in a century defined by dramatic industrial revolution. This led to a questioning in the creative arts surrounding past and future, tradition and succession. Within architecture this culminated in an underlying narrative striving for something more than the old rigor of styles or pastiche interludes, towards a pursuit of a new style capable of heralding in this new age.

Mackintosh's formative years were spent on the brink of this period in the creative arts at the Glasgow School of Art under the progressive directorship of Francis Newberry. His education was supplemented with a broad range of craft disciplines, alongside the architectural teaching. This is seen as crucial to forming his appreciation, and later sympathy towards, an architectural approach that encompassed artistic, ideological and practical considerations. The manuscripts for lectures he gave as a student provide valuable insight into his alliance ideologically with Ruskin and Lethaby, concerning the path of continuation for architectural design. These teachings advocated the value of architecture as both an intellectual and practical undertaking, acknowledging the power architecture derives from tradition and symbolism, whilst envisaging a new tradition for architecture being formed from an appreciation of the natural world.

This coincided with Mackintosh's own disposition to an interest in nature, tradition and mysticism. His close alliance to his peers, Herbert McNair and Margaret and Frances Macdonald, provided a collective investigation into these ethereal themes, closely aligning with those being explored in the Symbolist manifesto. Yet he was not as committed to these themes as his peers, retaining his interest in botany and pattern design, resulting in figurative watercolours that were more stylised.

In this context, the design of the Mack and the stained glass within is significant as it was an early commission, a testing ground for these ideas. The purpose of his design, aside from fulfilment of the brief, was one of experimentation with synthesising these ideals and aesthetics from which he would go on to develop into the exquisite schemes in his tea room commissions.

Mackintosh's stained glass has a duality of being both ornamental and an abstracted narrative of these natural and ethereal themes. This duality emphasises that in order to comprehend his intentions, his work needs to be contextualised. This infers that his work is a refinement of style and design permeated with an underlying narrative, the themes of which lie in his early figurative watercolours. Attention to the stained glass in the Mack has previously been partially overlooked, with the focus of literature concerning his wider scheme architecturally, or an iconographic interpretation of his stained glass motifs. The stained glass in the Mack highlights this need for

cohesive understanding of Mackintosh's work as his approach was all encompassing with overlap between all of his design work, architectural and artistic.

Through exploring his stained glass in the context of his formative influences, insight can be drawn regarding his intentions and narratives. Further research into this topic will help to retain integrity, adding to the knowledge of those who manage his collections, as well as adding to the public's appreciation of his work.

The fire in May 2014 was a devastating loss of historic fabric, yet it has provided the opportunity for an extensive investigation into the Mack and a renewed celebration of his work. The building is revealing overlooked aspects of his designs, renewing interest in Mackintosh's creative endeavours and curiously redefining many widely held beliefs, those half remembered traditions, that have grown part of this extraordinary building.

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